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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God of infinite goodness, confirm Your past mercies to us by giving us strength to be faithful to Your commands.

Lord, help our lawmakers this day to use their understanding, time, and talents to do what You desire. May they desire to please You with faithful service as You rule their hearts and guide their thoughts, words, and actions. Lord, enable our Senators to fulfill their duty to love You with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. Take possession of their hearts and order their steps by the power of Your loving providence.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, Monday, July 19, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. HIRONO thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, runaway costs and surging inflation are a huge worry for middle-class families. Every survey confirms it. Every conversation confirms it.

Over the last 12 months, during this economic recovery, the average American worker earned a 3.6-percent raise, but inflation has risen so steeply that it has turned that into a nearly 2-percent pay cut.

Remember, at the beginning of the year, the Biden administration inherited a historically strong economic trajectory. Thanks to the smart, targeted, bipartisan policies we passed last year, our economy was primed to get millions of Americans back to work with competitive pay while consumers unleashed pent-up demand. But, alas,

that was before Democrats decided to pour \$2 trillion into a long list of liberal pet projects and insisted on making it less appealing for workers to actually go back to work.

Today, essentials like gas and groceries have gotten more and more expensive. Bigger purchases consumers had put off during the pandemic are getting even further out of reach. Across the country, working families and employers alike are feeling the pinch, an effective tax increase on both the wages and the savings of the middle class.

Now, our colleagues weren't flying blind. They weren't naive. They knew they were passing what the White House Chief of Staff said was designed to be "the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation." And they knew the risks, which one liberal economist described as "inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation."

Sure enough, inflation just clocked the fastest year-on-year increase since 2008, but, apparently, according to President Biden himself, the solution is—listen to this—even more of the same. Today, instead of deflecting attention from the fact that his administration's springtime approach was flat wrong, the President actually doubled down. He suggested the right way to shake this inflation was—listen to this—another \$3.5 trillion in spending.

This is the same reckless taxing and spending spree the Democrats dreamt up when they assumed our economy would be having the opposite problem. But now all that same borrowing, printing, and spending is supposed to be what the doctor ordered to fight inflation?

Inflate our way out of inflation. Let's hope the American people don't have to learn firsthand how that strategy would work out. Another multitrillion-dollar reckless taxing and spending spree, believe me, is the last thing American families need.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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